

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Arnold et al

Serial No.: Unknown

Filed: Herewith

Group No.: Unknown

Examiner: Unknown

Docket No. AUGA15000005

For: **A WARMING APPARATUS WITH AN INFLATABLE COVER AND AN INLET PORT PLUG (As Amended)**

BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

In advance of the first examination in this case, Applicants request amendment of the subject application, as follows:

IN THE TITLE

Please amend the title to read --A WARMING APPARATUS WITH AN INFLATABLE COVER AND AN INLET PORT PLUG--.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, immediately below the title please insert the following paragraph:

--This is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/496,599, filed February 2, 2000, which is a continuation application of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/368,206, filed August 4, 1999, which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/08/624,101, filed March 29, 1996, now U.S. Patent No. 5,997,572.--.

Page 3, line 1 through Page 4, line 3, please delete and insert the following:

--An apparatus to warm a person includes an inflatable cover that can be disposed on a portion of the person's body. Two inlet ports are provided in the inflatable cover and plug is removably received in at least one port of the two ports. The plug may have a planar central body and a plurality of extensions that are coplanar with the central body and which extend from the central body, at least two of which are receivable in the one port.

Alternatively, the plug includes a flange, a substantially vertical ring-like wall receivable in the one port, and at least two protuberances which extend from the substantially vertical ring-like wall to resist removal of the plug from the one port.--

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please delete the current Abstract and insert the following:

--An apparatus for warming a person includes an inflatable cover having two inlet ports, and a plug removably received in one of the ports. With the plug received in the one port, the cover can be inflated by way of the port without the plug.--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 1-33.

Please amend Claim 34, as follows:

34. (Amended) A method for controlling airflow through an inflatable device having two or more inlet ports for admitting airflow into the device, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plug having a central body and a plurality of extensions which are coplanar with and extend from the central body;

introducing an airflow into the device through a first inlet port; and

restricting egress of the airflow through a second inlet port by placing the plug in the second inlet port and retaining the plug in the second inlet port by inserting at least two of the plurality of extensions into the second inlet port.

Please add the following claims:

35. (Added) An apparatus for warming a person, comprising:

an inflatable cover for disposition on a portion of a person's body;

two inlet ports in the inflatable cover; and

a plug removably received in at least one port of the two ports.

36. (Added) The apparatus of claim 35, the plug including:

a planar central body; and,

a plurality of extensions coplanar with the central body and which extend from the central body, at least two of which are receivable in the one port.

37. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions is curved.

38. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions is triangular.

39. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions is rectangular.

40. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions is formed from a resilient material .

41. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions has a distal end which is not coplanar with the central body.

42. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions has a distal end which is formed at an angle.

43. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein at least one of the extensions has a distal end which is notched.

44. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the plug is a plastic material.

45. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the plug is a wood pulp material.

46. (Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the plurality of extensions includes an even number of opposing extensions.

47. (Added) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the plurality of extensions includes two pairs of opposing extensions.

48. (Added) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein the plurality of extensions includes three pairs of opposing extensions.

49. (Added) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the plug includes:
a flange ; and
a substantially vertical ring-like wall receivable in the one port; and
at least two protuberances which extend from the substantially vertical ring-like wall to
resist removal of the plug from the one port.

50. (Added) The apparatus of claim 49 wherein at least one of the
protuberances has a lower slope.

51. (Added) The apparatus of claim 49 wherein at least one of the
protuberances has an upper slope.

52. (Added) The apparatus of claim 49 wherein the flange is sufficiently thick to
allow a user to grasp the flange and remove the plug from the one port.

53. (Added) The apparatus of claim 49 wherein at least one of the
protuberances is retractable.

54. (Added) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the inflatable cover is for
transverse disposition across the chest of a person's body.

55. (Added) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the inflatable cover is for
disposition on a lower portion of a person's body.

56. (Added) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein:
the first inlet port includes a first sheet of flexible material attached to the inflatable cover
and a hole adapted to receive the nozzle of an air hose; and
the second port includes a second sheet of flexible material attached to the inflatable
cover and a hole adapted to receive the nozzle of an air hose.

57. (Added) The apparatus of claim 56, the plug including:
a planar central body; and,
a plurality of extensions coplanar with the central body and which extend from the central body, at least two of which are receivable in the hole of the first sheet and in the hole of the second sheet.

58. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions is curved.

59. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions is triangular.

60. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions is rectangular.

61. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions is formed from a resilient material .

62. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions has a distal end which is not coplanar with the central body.

63. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions has a distal end which is formed at an angle.

64. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein at least one of the extensions has a distal end which is notched.

65. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein the plug is a plastic material.

66. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein the plug is a wood pulp material.

67. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57 wherein the plurality of extensions includes an even number of opposing extensions.

68. (Added) The apparatus of claim 67 wherein the plurality of extensions includes two pairs of opposing extensions.

69. (Added) The apparatus of claim 67 wherein the plurality of extensions includes three pairs of opposing extensions.

70. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57, wherein the inflatable cover is for transverse disposition across the chest of a person's body.

71. (Added) The apparatus of claim 57, wherein the inflatable cover is for disposition on a lower portion of a person's body.

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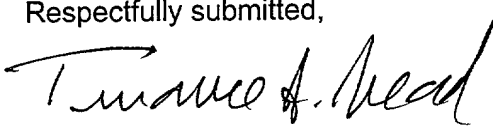
REMARKS

Claims 1-33 have been cancelled. Claim 34 has been amended to broaden its scope. Claims 35-71 have been added to extend claim coverage to subject matter not included in the originally-filed claims. Claims 34-71 remain in the application.

A recent CAFC decision Augustine Medical, Inc. v. Gaymar Industries, Inc., 50 USPQ2d 1900 (CAFC 1999) concerns patents owned by the applicant and has been included with the Information Disclosure Statement submitted with this response. In this decision, the CAFC limits the inflatable thermal blankets claimed in those patents to thermal blankets which are self-erecting. The applicant in the present application has specified in the claims "an inflatable device" or "an inflatable cover". These terms are expressly intended to be broader than the terms used in the patents addressed by the CAFC decision and to ensure that the inflatable devices and covers claimed in the present application are not limited to self erecting inflatable thermal blankets.

This Preliminary Amendment is submitted in advance of the first examination of the subject application. No new matter has been entered.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 23, 2001

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

34. (Amended) A method for controlling airflow through an inflatable [thermal blanket] device having two or more inlet [parts] ports for admitting [the] airflow into the [blanket] device, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plug having a central body [diameter substantially as large as an inside diameter of the inlet part] and a plurality of extensions which are coplanar with and extend [beyond] from the central body;

introducing an airflow into the device [inflatable thermal blanket] through a first inlet port [part]; and

restricting egress of the airflow through a second inlet port by placing the plug in [over] the second inlet port and retaining the plug in [over] the second inlet port [part] by inserting at least two of the plurality of extensions into the second inlet port.